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MRS BANWELL'S LEGACY.

MRS BANWELL was a widow; doubly so, indeed, for she had 'planted' two husbands—item, a retired butcher, and item a small money-lender. Each had borne fruit after his kind; and Mrs Banwell lived comfortably on the produce, about four hundred a year. We called her, perhaps rather unkindly, the Vampire. Yet there was one thing we could not but admire about the widow—she was so consistent. There was no nonsense about her, no hypocrisy, nor affectation of fine motives. We had known her as a 'girl'—well, say of seven or eight and thirty, buxom, comely, and with a capacity for making herself exceedingly agreeable when she chose. She never made any secret of her intentions; she doted on old men, and would marry an old man—or two, if needful—to obtain a respectable maintenance and due provision for the future. There was no reliance to be placed in young men, she used to say (regarding them in the light of an investment); no knowing how they would turn out; whether, having money, they would not risk and lose it; or having none, if they would ever push their way on to fortune. It was a great speculation to marry a young man; and not being of a speculative turn of mind, she preferred the more solid investment of a comfortable old gentleman who had been through the world, gathered up his earthly dross into the Three per Cents, and only wanted a companion to see him home the last mile or two through this vale of tears.

So she married the butcher. All butchers are mortal; but old butchers, accustomed all their lives to the blue serge smock and the dangling steel, when they retire, go out of business, out of their element, and out of the world nearly together. With nothing more to kill, there was nothing more to live for, so the retired butcher retired for good. The butcher died; and, after decently mourning his loss for two years, and settling up his affairs, his relict became Mrs Banwell.

Three per Cents killed Mr Banwell. Deprived of the risk and excitement attached to lending

small sums, and discounting bills at exorbitant rates, and receiving nothing but steady, fixed, half-yearly payments of three per cent., broke his heart. He would gladly have returned to business, but had sold his connection; and he possessed neither aptitude nor liking for any other sort of monetary business than his own particular walk, and he was too old to commence again in that in some other town. There was little left for him to do but to die; which, after mature reflection, he did.

Mrs Banwell had done her duty by both husbands. She had been kindly and affectionate, and had proved a most agreeable companion to smooth the declining years of each. She had spent the evening of their days with them, seen them home; and having herself returned to the world, she lived on the two dead men. That was why we called her the Vampire.

Her first husband, the butcher, had no immediate relatives who felt themselves aggrieved at the disposition of his property. The widow took her third share, whilst the remainder was distributed among the distant relations. In Mr Banwell's case, however, his widow received, by the will, two-thirds of the estate real and personal of which he died possessed, whilst the residue went to deceased's nephew, Mr Loney, wharfinger of St Katherine's Docks, London, who had always been brought up to consider himself heir to his uncle's entire property. Of course, Mr Loney was not well pleased on first hearing of his uncle's marriage; but frequent visits had convinced him that Mrs Banwell was a very affable and agreeable sort of person, whom it was desirable moreover to 'keep in' with. So they had always been on friendly terms. Mr Loney was even less pleased on hearing the will read; but not seeing how a rupture with his aunt could mend matters, he continued to maintain friendly relations with her. Indeed, Mrs Banwell found his services of great use in settling Mr Banwell's affairs; and in many difficult matters had appealed to him for advice, which he always gave in a business-like way, still, however, regarding Mrs Banwell in his heart, notwithstanding her

affability, as a professional woman, who made it her business to marry old men, and live on them after they were dead, and one who, in the exercise of that profession, had 'done him' out of a considerable sum of money. We must all live—if we can—but we none of us like those who, very immediately and very obviously, live upon us. Whilst, therefore, Mr Loney fully accorded Mrs Banwell her right and title to live upon him (as he considered she was doing by receiving the largest share of his uncle's money under the will), he did not like her any the more for it, especially as he had a wife and a large family to provide for. Yet, as he said, what is the good of a quarrel? It would infallibly alienate any possible intentions she may have of restoring part of the money to us at her death; or, on the other hand, it will put it out of my power to repay her in kind for the very grasping and covetous disposition I think she has evinced.

Accordingly, there was no quarrel; and some four years after the death of her last lamented, found Mrs Banwell (*etate circiter* fifty) retired from the profession of marrying old people, having amassed a competence on which to live for the rest of her days in the neat and pretty cottage called Woodbury, situated just outside our town of Winterford, where she dwelt at peace with all mankind, and particularly respected by shopkeepers, as she paid cash for everything. At this point of Mrs Banwell's history, when a novelist would certainly have done with her, my veracious story in reality commences; the preceding portion being taken by way of a prologue necessary to its due comprehension.

About this time, an old gentleman of very unassuming habits came to Winterford, and rented a humble little cottage not far from Mrs Banwell's more pretentious residence of Woodbury. His name was Chatfield, a little old man, with very twinkling eyes, and a seedy wig of nut-brown hair, as palpably the work of men's fingers as the thatch over his cottage. He must have been very old indeed—how old, I am afraid to guess—but his eyes had always a contented, and often a merry twinkle, as though secretly enjoying a joke, puckering up the very crow's-feet in spite of themselves. He was not a good-looking old man, for he had a complexion like a bad medlar. He lived very frugally, and quite alone, saving for an old housekeeper who attended on him; and seldom went out, except for half an hour's airing on foot, when the weather was mild. His dress was remarkable only for the genteel shabbiness attained by vigorous brushing combined with long and careful wear. He had resided in Winterford quite a twelvemonth without a soul taking any notice of him except the milkman, the postman, and the few tradespeople who deemed it worth while to call for his scanty orders, when it began to be whispered that Mr Chatfield was very rich. It was impossible to trace any foundation for the rumour; but once started, the old man's penurious habits, shabby clothes, and reserved demeanour, afforded, to superficial inquirers, a proof that he was of a miserly turn. Folks

were still speculating on the subject, when, one day, looking out of her drawing-room window, Mrs Banwell saw this identical Mr Chatfield clinging to her garden-railings for support, as though taken suddenly ill. In real alarm, the widow went out, and finding him seized with a fit, and speechless, at once obtained assistance to convey him to his cottage. Arrived there, Mrs Banwell and those neighbours who had accompanied her, waited down-stairs, in Mr Chatfield's little front-parlour, to hear the doctor's opinion of the case. Whilst waiting, the widow regarded the room with some curiosity, to see if it afforded any evidence of Mr Chatfield's rumoured wealth. None, apparently. The furniture was scanty, poor, and of the precise degree of shabbiness of the owner's clothes. The one thing distinctive about the room was that it belonged obviously to a man who had to do with ships. It was hung with shipping pictures—lithographs mostly, representing screw and paddle steamers, with particulars of tonnage and horsepower, plans and sections of vessels, together with drawings of various clipper-built barks and brigs of large size. Several models of vessels were placed about the room, and these, with the pictures, constituted the sole articles of an ornamental character, excepting, perhaps, a very old chess-board, marked 'History of England, in Two Volumes;' and another much smaller volume of dark wood, about four inches by three, in shape and general appearance like a small Prayer-book, which occupied a conspicuous position on the mantel-shelf. Presently, the doctor came down, and stated there was no cause for alarm, that Mr Chatfield would do very well, his attack having been nothing more than the result of general debility.

On returning home, still thinking about Mr Chatfield and his probable connection with the shipping interest, it occurred to Mrs Banwell to write to her nephew Mr Loney, who, from his position in St Katherine's Docks, had largely to do with shipping. So, by way of postscript to a friendly letter, she said: 'By-the-bye, we have a strange old gentleman who has taken a cottage near mine—a Mr Chatfield—and a silly report has got about that he is rich. It appears he has had to do with shipping in some way, and if so, I thought it possible you might know something of him. It is the merest curiosity on my part, but one does like to know *who* one's neighbours are.'

Now, it so happened Mr Loney *did* know Mr Chatfield very well, having had a good deal to do with him in the way of business, and having also spent many pleasant evenings at the old gentleman's house in London in past times. Tossing the letter to his wife, he said: 'Here's my blessed old step-aunt, I do verily believe, looking out a step-uncle for me.'

However, after a little consideration, he wrote a reply to Mrs Banwell's letter. The part relating to Mr Chatfield was as follows: 'Respecting your inquiry about Mr Chatfield, I knew him for many years whilst he was in London, and shall be pleased to pay him my respects when I come to Winterford. I cannot ascertain the precise amount of his wealth, but this I can tell you, that although he has now renounced all active connection with the shipping interest, he is at the present time a *part-owner of a vessel of more than fifteen hundred tons burden*. I must say no more, and even this is in strict confidence, as Mr Chatfield is an

eccentric person, and particularly reticent about his affairs.

Mr Loney was wrong in his surmise about Mrs Banwell. To do the widow justice, her intentions were not matrimonial; nevertheless, on receipt of this intelligence, she began to take a very lively interest in old Mr Chatfield's welfare, and commenced sending daily to ask after his health—a simple civility which none but the uncharitable could misconstrue, except on the ground that she had not done so before.

When sufficiently recovered, the old man used his first strength to call at Woodbury Cottage, and thank Mrs Banwell for the assistance rendered him when taken ill, and for her solicitude. The widow on her part was particularly gracious. She chided him for keeping himself so much shut up from intercourse with other people, and told him plainly that society was what he wanted, and what he must have. And she insisted that this his first visit was to be the prelude of a great many more.

'My good Mr Chatfield, you really must do as I prescribe. What are we here for in this world, if not to minister to each other's comforts? It will not do for you to bury yourself underground like a mole. And I do insist that whenever you feel a little dull or lonely, as you must feel at times—a man used to active life such as yourself—that you come over here for a little cheerful change. And if you do not come often, I shall come to see you in a neighbourly way, and try and cheer you up. We are both of us too old for the world to talk nonsense about, and may as well be sociable.'

Mr Chatfield seemed unaffectedly surprised. His shrewd little eyes puzzled over Mrs Banwell's face, to find some motive for her interest in his happiness—but gave it up. However, he at once promised to avail himself of her kindness.

'It is lonely at times,' he said, 'for I have neither chick nor child belonging to me to write me a letter even. And it is the more kind of you, Mrs Banwell, because I am a poor man—a very poor man, mum. But then it takes a great deal of money to make a rich man, don't it, mum?'

'Very true,' assented the widow.

'How much money do you think now, for instance?' asked Mr Chatfield.

'Well, really, that altogether depends upon circumstances of position; but should you not think twenty thousand pounds enough to make the generality of people rich?'

'More than that, mum; that's not enough to satisfy a man—only enough to give him an appetite for more; and at five times that, a man would feel hungry still.'

'Gracious! Mr Chatfield, you're never contented.'

'That's where 'tis, mum. You've hit it: no one is rich till he is content.'

'Are you content, then, yourself?'

'No, mum, I ain't; and, what's more, ain't likely to be, or to meet the man who is.'

Mrs Banwell had at first thought the old gentleman was going to give her some notion of the extent of his resources, but found he was only talking in a circle, to leave off where he began, which aggravated her as much as his persistent use of the word 'mum.'

However, Mr Chatfield soon became a constant visitor at Woodbury Cottage, and the widow had

every reason to congratulate herself on being installed in his good graces. She gave a goodly number of parties, and invited him to all of them. He always came, scrupulously neat and clean, but in a well-worn dress coat, and a wig a shade better than the one he usually mounted. In point of fact, Mrs Banwell spent a good deal of money on the old fellow, and, what is more, thought it money well laid out. Some months passed so. Then Mr Loney came down to pay a short visit to his aunt, in the course of which he smoked his pipe more than once at Mr Chatfield's.

From that time, Mr Chatfield became less reserved in his allusions to his own fortune when in Mrs Banwell's company. He even admitted to her that he was, in fact, part-owner in a vessel of large tonnage—and in addition to that, spoke of dividends he was receiving from another source—not obtrusively, but in the most casual manner in conversation. The reason of this change, not to make any mystery about it, was, that he had either discovered himself, or else (and more likely) Mr Loney had helped him to discern that the lively interest the widow took in him and his affairs was not wholly of an unselfish nature. Not that he had any dread of being married, like the butcher or the money-lender, whose fate he had heard about from Mr Loney; not at all: he saw Mrs Banwell had other notions respecting him. Those two, metaphorically speaking, the Vampire had cooked before eating (Had they not both passed the fires of Hymen first?). But she did not mean to marry Mr Chatfield. It was her desire to eat Mr Chatfield raw, without any cooking. However, her victim reconciled himself to his horrible prospects with the best grace imaginable, and with the utmost docility even prepared to truss himself ready for the Vampire's table, as follows.

One day he walked into Mrs Banwell's sitting-room, apparently perturbed in his mind.

'What is the matter, my dear Mr Chatfield?'

'O mum,' he said, 'I've had some money left me.'

'Surely a legacy is no cause for sorrow?' she remarked.

'It ought to be, mum, if the person who leaves it is dear enough to us to make the gift really valuable. But I didn't say any one had left me money, but the other way—the money has left me. It is not much, but enough to worry about, and enough to remind me that, in the course of nature, I shall soon leave all my money. I am going, mum, to make my will. I have no near relative in the world; I have outlived them all. The question is, who am I to leave it to? What do you say?'

'Really, Mr Chatfield—such a question—and to me—I don't know what to say.' She hesitated.

'There are hospitals.'

'Yes, mum, there are hospitals. There are also penitentiaries. But there are also friends—friends, who, though they may now see in a legacy no cause of sorrow'—

'Not in the legacy itself,' interrupted Mrs Banwell, trying hard to cry, whilst in an ecstasy of delight; 'but the deplorable event which made it immediately payable would be a cause of excruciating woe.'

'Friends, mum,' he continued, 'who would, we will say, see a matter of mourning in a legacy (Yes,' he thought to himself, 'a matter of fifty pounds' worth black silk and crape, and very

becoming wear to a woman of her age), but who would naturally feel slighted if deprived of such a cause of woe; friends who have been generously kind when the world frowned upon us, and whom we can only repay by leaving them the handkerchief of affliction, with the blessed assurance that our loss is their gain. Oh, my dear mum, you've been a true friend to me—you know you have. Haven't you?"

("He certainly wanders, the old silly," thought Mrs Banwell; "but for all that, as good-hearted an old soul as ever breathed.")

"But, indeed, Mr Chatfield," she continued aloud, "you should not distress yourself thus. The only advice I can give is, that you act on the dictates of your own generous impulses; and if, indeed, I am so happy as to be deemed a friend, leave me at least—your regard, friendship's dearest legacy."

"Mum, you have decided me. I will at once get the matter off my mind. I have only one more favour to beg, and that is, that you will kindly honour my poor cottage with your company, and make tea for us this evening, as I shall have the lawyer and his clerk there to execute the document."

Mrs Banwell promised, and Mr Chatfield withdrew.

When the widow arrived at Mr Chatfield's, she was shewn into the little front room by the housekeeper, who said her master would be down-stairs in a few minutes. The lawyer had not come; and when the housekeeper withdrew, Mrs Banwell was left quite alone in the room. On a rickety three-legged side-table, she espied Mr Chatfield's desk. It was not quite shut, for there was a stiffly folded parchment, which not only prevented the desk shutting, but projected far enough to shew the nature of the document. It was undoubtedly the will, which had been sent to Mr Chatfield to read over before executing it in the evening. Listening for a minute, to satisfy herself she was safe from intrusion, Mrs Banwell gently slipped the parchment from the desk, and hurriedly skimmed it through.

"Dear old fellow!" she murmured to herself when she had done; "he has left me everything he possesses, except the furniture—all his estate real and personal, all his moneys and investments in consols and elsewhere; and, yes—also his share in the large ship *R. G.*—of which," it says, "my executor has full and particular information in a private letter of instructions." And the executor is Mr Loney. Well, that is good. And what a grateful old soul!"

Hurriedly replacing the document in the desk precisely as she found it, and withdrawing to the opposite side of the room, she awaited Mr Chatfield's advent.

There is nothing further to say about the tea-party, except that the lawyer and his clerk arrived in good time, and that after a course of muffins and crumpets, the will was executed by Mr Chatfield, and duly attested by the legal gentlemen. It was not read aloud; but from certain obscure hints and allusions, the testator gave Mrs Banwell unmistakably to understand what she had previously ascertained by her own eyesight—namely, that she was the person principally interested in his bequests.

From that time, Mrs Banwell became devoted to the old gentleman. She was to him as a daughter,

as a niece, and as a grandchild. She studied his comforts, made him presents, and laid out herself and her money to please him in every way.

The worst of him was, he was so tough. The butcher and the money-lender were nothing to Mr Chatfield. He only seemed to thrive and to grow younger and stronger for relinquishing his frugal habits in favour of dining three times a week at Woodbury Cottage. Yet Mrs Banwell dared not relax her attentions lest the old man should alter his will. Three or four years passed so lightly over Mr Chatfield's head that he seemed to have taken a fresh lease of life; and the widow began to fear he would outlive her after all.

However, one winter's morning, without any premonitory illness, the old man was found dead in his bed. There was an examination, but of a purely formal kind, for that he had died of natural causes was as plain as that his life had been eked out, for the past year or two, by generous diet. His death was, in truth, no very heavy blow to Mrs Banwell—it was a happy release to her as well as to him. She was getting tired of it; and her sigh at receiving the intelligence was one of heart-felt relief.

Mr Loney came down to the funeral; and when that was over, the will was read.

It was all true. With the exception of the few sticks of furniture, given to the housekeeper, Mrs Banwell was bequeathed the whole of the property—moneys, bonds, securities of all sorts, and Mr Chatfield's share of the vessel. She was likewise left residuary legatee. Well, that was a comfort to the mourner, at anyrate. Mrs Banwell proceeded to ask Mr Loney for some particulars as to the property of the deceased.

In reply, Mr Loney stated, with a woeful shake of his head, that the particulars were contained in a letter addressed to him, and this enclosed a second note to Mrs Banwell, which note, he concluded, would save him the pain of explanation. The note to the widow ran thus:

MUM—"What are we here for in this world but to minister to each other's comforts?" I told you I was poor, yet you ministered to mine. You are a good woman. You have done your duty. Duty is its own reward. I therefore think that, on the whole, you invested your money well. But it was a speculation, you must admit, and the security was not first-rate. I can only shew my sense of your conduct by leaving you all I have in the world. This at least shews generosity of motive on my part; and, if your kindness was really disinterested, you will take the Will for the deed. All my moneys and securities everywhere don't amount to sixpence. My profession (ship-draughtsman and designer) enabled me to save just enough to buy a life-annuity, which dies with me. But I am part-owner of a vessel—a ship of large tonnage and great value—that share I can at least bequeath to you; and Mr Loney has my instructions to put you in possession thereof. Besides this, I leave you (by particular request) my regard—friendship's dearest tribute, trusting you will not think it dearly bought.—Yours truly,
To Mrs BANWELL. W. CHATFIELD.

"Yes," said Mr Loney, going to the mantel-shelf; "O dear, yes. It is quite right about the ship. The late Mr Chatfield was part-owner in a vessel of immense tonnage. And this is his part."

He placed in Mrs Banwell's hands a small and neat wooden volume about four inches by three, tastefully inscribed in gilt letters—'A PIECE OF THE Royal George.'

OUR JUDGES.

In the courts of Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, and Exchequer, at Westminster, fifteen judges administer justice in the name of the sovereign, who is the fountain of it. To the sovereign, as father of the country, every subject has a right to appeal against wrongs done to him, whether by the sovereign's other subjects, or by foreigners. In the event of the injury having been done by foreigners who are officers of a state at peace with our own, it is the business of the sovereign to obtain redress through his Secretary of State writing diplomatically on the subject to the government of the friendly state; but if the injury have been done by a foreigner in a private capacity, the subject's remedy is by action or indictment in the courts of this country, or of the foreigner's country, according to the place where the injury was committed. All questions of law between subject and subject, or between subject and sovereign in this country, are triable by the judges of the courts above mentioned.

The judges hold a special and peculiar position; and their office is so arranged with a view to entire independence, that they may be said to be completely passionless upon all matters brought before them. The scale on which their official income is calculated removes them from the temptation of bribery; and the tenure by which they hold their office is so secured from attack by the crown, that they need not fear anything from court influence. The salary of the Chief-justice of the Queen's Bench, who is Lord Chief-justice of England, is eight thousand pounds a year; the Lord Chief-justice of the Common Pleas, and the Lord Chief-baron of the Exchequer, receive seven thousand pounds apiece; and the puisne judges of all the courts receive each a salary of five thousand pounds a year. To guard them from undue influence or intimidation from above, the judges, who are appointed originally by royal patent, are by act of parliament secured in their places so long as they behave themselves properly; and the sole judges of their behaviour are the two Houses of parliament, by whose united petition alone can they be removed from office.

Formerly, their position was very different. They were the nominees of the crown, generally appointed because of their pliability to crown interests, and removable at the pleasure of the crown; their salaries were quite inadequate to support the dignity of their office, and they were driven, or at least induced by the system, to seek through other channels the means of subsistence. Bribes were freely given, and were accepted by the judges as a matter of course, and as a sort of ballast to weight their judgments; while in cases where the crown was interested, the verdict of the law-courts was often infamously venal, the judges sometimes even taking the part of counsel against the defendant, instead of holding the balance even between the two sides. Until the period when the office of judge was rendered completely independent, the statute-book bears witness to the evil effects of the old system. It is certain that in the

old time, when it was often given as a reason for refusing some very reasonable request, that the petition could not be granted without making a new law, there would not have been passed statutes against anything unless there had been a crying need for them; still less would there have been any statutes against those who were the special friends of the king, and under his peculiar protection, in an age when the will of the king was all-powerful. Yet we find numerous laws in the statute-book directed against the holders of the judicial office, and against those dependent upon them. The statute of Marlbridge, in the fifty-second year of Henry III., prohibited the acceptance of a fine for permission to have a fair hearing in court. Disgraceful as such a state of things was, it was all of a piece with the custom of the age, and with an example set by the king himself, who not only did not scruple to take presents from suitors that they might have justice, but also did not scruple to set down the proceeds of the same in his regular accounts. The Book of the Exchequer shews that the Norman kings—notably King John—took large gratifications as the price of granting requests: one lady gave two hundred pullets for permission to have an interview with her husband, who was a prisoner; a bishop was fined two butts of wine for neglecting to remind the king to give a certain lady a girdle; and there are many entries of gifts received from persons who prayed they might have justice against some magnate whom they were afraid to tackle without the king's protection previously secured.

There was another way in which the royal officers used to make money immorally, and against which it was found necessary to pass a law. They 'maintained' suits, as it was called—that is to say, they encouraged people to go to law, and found means to enable the unmoneyed suitor to carry on his suit, taking a handsome slice of the damages as their reward; and that they might do this thing the less scandalously, they employed 'somebody else'—their clerks, or an agent of some sort—to arrange matters, while they themselves sat on the judgment-seat. The statute of Westminster the First therefore declared that no officer of the king, by himself or other, shall maintain suits, and 'he that doth so shall be punished at the king's pleasure.' Though it would seem that the sheriffs and their officers were more especially pointed at by these enactments, there is no doubt but the justices were also included, and that not without reason.

The prohibitions against the judges taking fees from the suitors, and against the king's signet being sent in disturbance of law, were repeated several times, the idea being that statutes of a special kind expired with the prince who made them; and as judicial corruption continued in spite of what had been done, the laws against it were renewed on several occasions. Acts of parliament were also passed forbidding the judges to give counsel in cases where the king is party.

Notwithstanding these salutary restraints, the sources of justice were not kept clean and pure till many years after the statute of Marlbridge was passed. The custom of taking fees was urged as an excuse when Lord Bacon was impeached, in the reign of James I., for having accepted large bribes from suitors in the Court of Chancery; and though of course the excuse, especially in the case of one

like Lord Bacon, could not be admitted for an instant, there was nevertheless something in it. The practice, forbidden by so many statutes, forbidden by all the principles of public and private morality, had crept in during unwatched times, and only culminated and became intolerable in the days of Lord Bacon. With Lord Bacon, whose punishment was heavy, the practice of judicial bribery as a systematised thing died out, though we read, chiefly through his enemies' report, how Judge Jeffreys grew rich by the pardons he sold in the course of the Bloody Assize; and it was not till the era when so many crooked things in the English constitution were made straight, the era of the Long Parliament, that the practice of disturbing the law through the royal influence upon the judges was done away. The coarse method of sending a sort of order to the judges under the king's hand and signet, directing them as to the way they should give judgment, was abandoned at a comparatively early date; but another practice had sprung up, which evaded the statutes, while it answered almost the same purpose as the suspensory letter under the signet. This practice was to take the opinions of the judges privately upon abstract questions of law, and then to apply them specially to particular cases, as though they were judgments of the court. Now, it generally happened that the judges gave their opinions separately, without having had the opportunity of conferring with one another, certainly without having had the advantage of argument by counsel before them. There was, of course, no objection to the king asking the advice of the judges on difficult points; indeed, it would have been better for every one concerned had the practice, honestly carried out, been more common; the objectionable part of the matter was, that the opinions of the judges being taken, were considered oracular and binding, as though pronounced after thorough and independent examination of the case. Under colour of them, the king or his privy-council many times did flagrant injustice, and justified themselves to themselves by saying they had taken the opinions of the most learned lawyers in the land. It rarely happened that these opinions ran counter to the known wishes of the king; so that the king was not often deterred from doing what he listed, even though it would not have stood the test of trial in open court. Richard II., who may be said to have invented this as well as many other irregular courses, took one opinion of his judges which cost some of them their lives. They told him that the acts of parliament passed by the hostile assembly in the eleventh year of his reign were not binding upon him, and that he might act as though they had never been made. He acted on this precious piece of advice so far as regarded those statutes which were unpalatable to him, and, setting them aside, used the *droit du plus fort* till the people arose and overthrew him. When the king's friends were obliged to flee, the judges were hunted down, and Tresilian, chief-justice, was ignominiously put to death. When the Star Chamber was abolished, the chiefs of the three courts being members of that tribunal, a statute of Charles I. enacted that for the future neither the king nor privy-council, by writs, orders, or the like, should exercise any jurisdiction saving through the ordinary courts of law; and since a period anterior to this time, a judge on being appointed has had to swear 'that

he will serve the queen, and indifferently administer justice to all men, without respect of persons, take no bribe, give no counsel where he is a party, nor deny right to any, though the queen or any other, by letters or by express words, command the contrary.'

Still further to preserve the passionless atmosphere in which the judicial office exists, the judges are not allowed to be in the House of Commons. The Lord Chancellor is chairman of the Upper House, of which the Lord Chief-justice is also sometimes a member; but in the Lower House, where political heat is greater, and where votes might be given with a view to promotion, the judges are not allowed to enter.

Of the House of Lords, they may be said in one sense to be members *ex officio*. They are summoned by writ on the meeting of each new parliament, though only to advise, not to consent, and it is understood they do not attend unless specially invited, after taking part in the ceremonial customary on the opening of parliament. Historically considered, they have a claim to be members of the Lords' House, and it is a question whether they do not owe to that fact, as much as to the fact that in court they are the queen's representatives, the distinctive title of 'my lord' by which they are addressed. Formerly, the hearing and determining of suits were referred to the king's grand council, consisting of all the royal tenants, who deputed committees of their own body to decide the cases for them. These committees consisted of men who were selected because of their special aptitude for the work, and who came in course of time to form a standing committee of the grand council for legal purposes. As the questions involved in suits became more technical—the Norman system of law was highly technical and suit-making—it became necessary that the committees who gave decisions upon them should be more specially qualified than the average lords of parliament were likely to be. Lawyers were therefore chosen to discharge the functions of the judicial committees of the grand council, which nevertheless reserved to itself the right to hear appeals from the judgments of its own committees. Hence the right of the House of Lords, as representing the ancient grand council, to hear appeals from all the law-courts in Westminster Hall. The lawyer delegates retained the style and dignity of those they represented, and were called 'lords' in the courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas, and 'barons' in the Court of Exchequer; and, as if to mark their old connection with the peerage, tradition has assigned them a place above baronets—the highest title of nobility beneath that of baron—and that place they still hold.

The sovereign is theoretically supposed to be present in the law-courts during the transaction of business. Edward IV. actually did sit; but James I. was advised, when he wanted to follow the example, that although he had a right to sit, he must not speak, a prohibition which did not suit the vain prince, who was, according to the Duke of Sully, 'the wisest fool in Europe.' In respect of this theory of the personal presence of the sovereign in the administration of justice, it has been made high treason to kill a judge while engaged in his court; to kill him elsewhere is simple murder. For some reason which is hid in obscurity, probably because the court was of later creation than

the other two, the barons of the exchequer are not protected by that 'divinity that doth hedge a king.' To kill them, whether in court or elsewhere, is simple murder; they do not represent the sovereign so specially as their brethren, except when they sit as judges of assize. Striking a judge in his court is punishable with loss of the right hand, and fine, and imprisonment; threatening or reviling a judge is punishable with fine and imprisonment. Contempt of court, which consists of disobedience in any form to the orders of the judge, is punishable with imprisonment during pleasure, and a fine. On the other hand, prisoners are protected against the tyranny and partiality of judges by several statutes, and a judge who should be guilty of these offences would be forthwith removed on petition of the two Houses of parliament. The language of Judge Jeffreys could not be heard twice in our modern law-courts, neither could the taunts with which condemned prisoners were often dismissed to their fate for many years after Jeffreys had ceased to pollute the bench, be repeated any more with impunity.

The scandalous behaviour of some of the judges who presided over the law-courts of the Stuart princes, directed the special attention of reformers, at the Revolution of 1688, to the whole question of judicial appointments; and the conduct of those judges who presided during the first few years of William III., quite determined the reformers to take action in the matter. It was considered too great temptation for a king, and too dependent a position for the judges, that the latter should be liable to removal at the royal will and pleasure. As Caesar's wife must be above suspicion, so there must not be the slightest handle for accusing a judge of partiality, especially in cases where the crown was concerned. The Act of Settlement therefore provided, that whereas formerly the judges held office by favour of the sovereign, they were in future to hold it during good behaviour, and were to be liable to removal only on the petition of both Houses of parliament.

When on circuit, or in the Central Criminal Court, the judges, who arrange amongst themselves which circuits they shall take, are invested with special powers by royal commissions, one of the commissions giving them place and precedence next to the sovereign himself. Once, when the king being at Brighton, the judges of assize were invited to the royal table, the question arose whether they should not sit above the queen-consort, and it was held as a matter of right that they were entitled to do so, and they sat above her accordingly. On another occasion, a judge, Lord Thurlow, though not on circuit, settled a point of precedence in his own favour thus: The Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., on occasion of some public ceremonial, rudely and ostentatiously stepped before the Chancellor. Lord Thurlow instantly stepped back, saying: 'Proceed, your Royal Highness. I represent your royal father. Majesty walks last.'

A judge is not liable in damages for any errors he may commit in the course of his administration. Mistakes of judgment, errors in law, misdirections to the jury, are remediable by appeal to a higher tribunal; and it is considered better that justice should in some cases be far to seek, than that the minds of judges should be harassed by suits, or the fear of suits, for wrong decisions. Even in the

almost impossible case of a decision proceeding upon malice in the judge, the only remedy for the suitor is in appeal; though punishment of deprivation would doubtless follow, in the event of the malice being proved against the judge. The only case in which a judge is liable to loss for misconduct or negligence is the case of his failing to take notice of an application addressed to him by a prisoner for a writ of Habeas Corpus. The liberty of the subject being regarded as so sacred a thing, that even the inviolability of the judge's purse is not to stand in the way of it, the Habeas Corpus Act declares that any judge who shall not issue his writ on application of a prisoner, and summon the jailer to bring up his captive, and shew cause why he detains him, shall be fined five hundred pounds.

Down to a time so recent as 1777, the judges' salaries were paid out of the sovereign's civil list; and, until after the accession of George III., the judges were deposed *ipso facto* by the demise of the crown. Both these practices were found to be highly inconvenient, and the former gave rise at least to a suspicion of undue influence being brought to bear on the part of the crown. The judges' salaries are now paid out of the public purse, in the same way that the wages of other state servants are paid; and by a statute of George III., the judges are continued in their office notwithstanding the death of the king who appointed them.

The judges are the constitutional advisers of the House of Lords, and are bound to give them assistance in the House whenever summoned for that purpose. The constitutional advisers of the crown are the Lord Chancellor, the Attorney-general, and the Solicitor-general; but, though irregular, it is not strictly unconstitutional for the crown to seek the advice of the judges in cases of difficulty. George II. referred the question of the legality of the sentence of court-martial on Admiral Byng, for the opinion of the judges; and, though the precedent is taken from unconstitutional times, Charles I. referred to them of his own motion, the question whether Felton, the murderer of the Duke of Buckingham, could legally be examined under torture of the rack. In that case, they decided, to their eternal honour, without cavil or dissent in any of them, that Felton 'ought not by the law to be tortured by the rack, for no such punishment is known or allowed by our law.'

GWENDOLINE'S HARVEST.

CHAPTER XXIII.—AN APT PUPIL.

ONE of the first duties which, notwithstanding her distress and trouble, the new-made widow decided to put into effect, was to write to Miss Judith Ferrier, and invite her down to Glen Druid before the funeral. It was, everybody said, a most thoughtful act, and one which did her the utmost credit. It was well known that the relations between her late husband and his sister had not been so amicable as they ought to have been; Gwendoline herself had more than once expressed regret that she could not persuade him to use conciliatory measures; and now that the time for reconciliation was past, she used the occasion of his death to hold out a friendly hand to this unknown lady. Nothing (everybody said) was certainly now to be gained by it; and from what

had been heard of this North British relative, the acquaintanceship could scarcely be desirable in any way. But it was a point of social duty, and Mrs Ferrier was not the one to overlook it. Miss Judith, preceded by a cold and guarded acceptance of her invitation, interlarded with pious phrases, and not without complaints of the manner in which she had been treated by 'poor Bruce,' arrived in due course, and did not belie expectation. A tall and bony virgin of fifty-five, with a turn for criticism upon all subjects save those to which criticism usually confines itself, and a frequent swift expression of disapprobation, was scarcely the sort of guest to mitigate the melancholy that overhung Glen Druid. But it was not Judith Ferrier's mission to mitigate melancholy, but to improve the occasion, and (if possible) her newly found sister-in-law. She came, of course, with most unfavourable impressions of her, and fully aware of the great need of improvement in which she stood. She had heard nothing but evil of her from her correspondent, Susan Barland, and she had her own opinion (and it was a bad one) of her ill-assorted marriage with 'poor Bruce'; but, on the other hand, there was this invitation—a tardy peace-offering indeed, but still most courteously and respectfully worded, and which, after all, she might reasonably enough, in accordance with her late husband's views, have omitted to send. Moreover, Gwendoline at least compared favourably with that poor, lost Italian woman, Giulia. She was not a foreigner, nor a papist, and what was quite as important in Judith's eyes, though she would have gone to the stake rather than confess it, she was the daughter of a real live baronet, now on view (for a limited period) at Glen Druid. The curious inconsistency that manifests itself so strongly in what is called the religious world, to bow down before the idol of rank, no matter of what very inferior clay its feet may be composed of, was very marked in Judith Ferrier.

There are not many noblemen, nor even baronets, dwelling in Glasgow, and, if the truth must be told, she had never yet sat at the same dinner-table with a person of title. She was a good woman, for all her narrowness of view and conventional virtue; she had an honest and kind heart, and a strong, if at times mistaken, sense of duty. She was really touched at the awfully sudden summons which her brother had received to the Supreme Court on High, and for her part (notwithstanding her complaining letter), she had at once forgiven him all his trespass against her; but it was a fact that on arriving at that house where he still lay dead, the prominent reflection in her mind was that Sir Guy Treherne of Bedivere Court would that evening take her in to dinner. The children, of course, excited in her considerable interest, although she took it in dudgeon that they bore unmistakable marks of their foreign origin in colouring and complexion. Their hair was dark, and their skin was olive, whereas they ought to have been blondes, as all the Ferriers were. Her own hair, it was true, was no longer golden; but Art had opposed for her the harsh decrees of Time, and supplied her with an auburn front. In this, and with a breastplate formed of one of the largest cairngorms that her native country ever produced, she did not despair of captivating Sir Guy. The baronet, on his part,

did not discourage her, for he understood that for some reason, to him incomprehensible, his daughter wished to conciliate this female portent, and he set himself to do so accordingly. Never, probably, did two people sit next to one another at the same board with fewer subjects of conversation in common than Miss Judith and himself; but she had come to worship, and he had only to accept the incense with graciousness and gravity. A smile under the circumstances would have been destruction, and yet—for a sense of humour was one of the few virtues he possessed—he had never felt more inclined for mirth; her attire, her accent, and, above all, her adulation of himself, tickled his very heart-strings. He thought of his debts, however, and kept his countenance. Surely Gwendoline would pay them, and especially since he was so strenuously exerting himself to advance her interests; and every now and then he stole an appealing glance at his daughter, to let her know what he was suffering for her sake.

Gwendoline herself, who had no title to Miss Judith's respect, was treated by that inflexible maiden with great sternness. For a whole week she called her 'Mrs Ferrier,' and maintained a reserve as chilling as silence and monosyllables could make it. But at last, as the drop of water wears away the stone, the unvarying respect and deference which her hostess shewed her began to thaw her heart, and take the starch out of her manner. It was impossible that wrath should not be turned away by such soft answers as were always given to her. Her opinion concerning the management of the children, and even of the household, was asked, and followed; and even her religious ideas, no matter at what length they were expanded, were listened to with the most exemplary patience. But what was most effective of all was the ready acquiescence which Gwendoline exhibited in her sister-in-law's views with respect to Mr Ferrier's will. Judith had years ago been very comfortably provided for by her brother, and of course had neither chick (for she lived in the heart of Glasgow) nor child, but still she deeply resented the omission of her name from 'poor Bruce's' testament. 'I did not want his money, my dear' (she had actually said 'my dear' on this occasion); 'but he might have left something, as it must strike even yourself, by way of remembrance to his own kith and kin.'

'My dear Miss Ferrier,' returned Gwendoline, 'I am more pleased than I can say to hear you speak upon this subject, because it shews that you feel quite at your ease with me, as I wish you to do.'

This was a bold stroke, for Judith might have replied with truth that she should have spoken her mind on the matter in question at all events; injustice being a thing she never 'put up with,' without protest; but the antagonistic and self-asserting stage was passed, and she only bowed with gravity.

'My dear husband left me many costly ornaments,' continued Mrs Ferrier, 'which I value only for his sake. It would be doing me a real favour—although, as respects yourself, it would be but taking your due—if you would select from them such articles as you please.' And she instantly led the way to her dressing-room, and laid the contents of her jewel-box before the astonished Judith. There was nothing quite so big as the cairngorm, but there was also nothing that was not ten times

as valuable. Miss Judith's eyes glistened; they had never looked upon such riches before; she had not even dreamed of such, for her bringing up had been in the strictest sect of the Pharisees, and the *Arabian Nights* had been a book tabooed.

Though her nature was acquisitive, it was not, however, rapacious, and she took but a moderate share of what was offered to her. Had she taken half, Gwendoline would not have considered it too great a price to pay for her sister-in-law's favour, which by this act she had completely secured. Notwithstanding this, she did not cease to cultivate it. Miss Ferrier had all the attention, so dear to ancient maiden ladies, paid to her by her hostess which respectful solicitude could suggest. Some scheme was every day devised for her amusement, and she was never suffered, by being left alone, to imagine herself neglected. Mrs Ferrier herself, when not engaged with the children, of whom she was laboriously careful, was her constant companion. Nor was this, strange as it may seem, so irksome to Gwendoline as solitude had now become. If not with Judith or in the nursery, she who had once been so self-reliant and independent of society, must now be closeted with her lawyer, or even exchanging small-talk with her waiting-maid. When perforce left alone, she either drugged herself to sleep with laudanum, or busied herself in writing to Piers.

This latter occupation was not so pleasurable as might, under the circumstances, have been expected. Piers Mostyn had not received the news that she was a free woman with such enthusiasm as he (surely) ought to have done, considering that he was aware how hateful her bondage had been to her. There was even a half-hesitating expression of wonder in his reply, that she could have written so ardently of the future so very soon. It was terrible to see her when, locked within her boudoir, she tore open the letter which she imagined would be full of passionate ecstasy, and read those words—her wrath and bitterness broke forth without restraint. 'Was it for this man, with his meagre conventionalities, that she had become the Thing she had?' Although it was impossible that he could guess *what* she had done, and suffered, he knew that she had suffered, and for his sake, and should have surely sent some acknowledgment of her past, some congratulation on her present—expressed some delight at the prospect of their common future. But he had done none of these things, at all events in the way which she had a right to expect. In her bitter wrath, she even reviled him with such terms as indeed were very fitting, but which were torture to her to have to frame, for she loved this man after her fierce fashion still, and if it was otherwise, there was no drawing back now. She had but him to cling to, and if he failed her—but he would not fail her; she clung to that with the tenacity of despair.

Was it fear, remorse, regret, which fed upon her very vitals, and made her whole existence a nightmare dream? Not any one of them, and yet, perhaps, all of them—she had only to be left alone to be consumed with vague horrors and forebodings. But in the presence of others she became at once herself, and played her part to admiration. She took no advantage of the privilege of seclusion granted to women in her bereaved condition, but was always at the service of her guest, or ready to

attend to household affairs. The golden opinions she had won from all as a wife acquired a new brightness from her behaviour as a widow, nay, as we have seen, her patient conciliation even disarmed her foe, and when Susan Barland gave utterance to some disparaging remark concerning her in the presence of Miss Ferrier, instead of meeting with the sympathy from her patroness and fellow-countrywoman which she had been led to expect, she received a sharp rebuke.

On the other hand, while Gwendoline had thus effected an alliance with one out of the only two persons who might be called her enemies, she broke with one who, after his fashion, had hitherto been her friend. He had been useful to her in a certain way, but he would no longer be so, and perhaps she was not sorry for the opportunity he himself afforded her of giving him what he would have called his *congé*, and Mr Barland 'the sack.'

Yearning for the delights of the metropolis, but yet not possessed of a sufficiently long purse to make all its pleasures attainable, Sir Guy resolved to make his first inroad into that exchequer which he fondly hoped (though, truth to say, he was not without his misgivings to the contrary) was to be henceforth a common one between himself and his daughter. She sought his society as she did that of everybody else, and there was therefore no difficulty in finding a fit time to speak. The place happened to be that walk round the Warrior's Helm, which has already formed the scene of more than one confidential meeting between the personages of our story. The hour was three in the afternoon, when Miss Judith Ferrier had retired, as her custom was, for a siesta; for at Glasgow she had been wont to dine early, and take her 'forty winks,' before she combined recreation and reflection by a walk in the grounds of the cemetery; and at Glen Druid, where the fare was better, she could not resist making the same heavy noonday meal, notwithstanding that she dined again at 7.30. Sir Guy and Gwendoline were therefore quite alone.

'My dear daughter,' said he impressively, but not apropos of anything particular, 'we have both of us had so much to think about of late, and so much to do' (this was a delicate hint at his own exertions to conciliate Miss Ferrier), 'that I have never yet congratulated you upon your present position of wealth and independence. You may imagine, however, what pride it gives your father to see you yet on the threshold of life in the possession of all that makes life pleasant.'

'Thank you, papa,' said Gwendoline coldly.

'I am not about to remind you, my dear, of what you owe to me, first, because nothing can be owed by a child to her father; and secondly, because I am sure it would be quite unnecessary to put the matter as a *claim* at all; but the fact is, it would be a great convenience to me if you would let me have a little money to free me from a temporary embarrassment—five hundred pounds, or so, would be amply sufficient for the present.'

'For the present, papa, it might,' was Gwendoline's measured reply. 'But I know you well enough to be aware that, if I gave you this sum, there would be practically no end to such applications; moreover, it would lead to a misunderstanding with respect to our mutual relations, which you yourself—if you remember—explained to me once in the clearest manner.'

Art had rendered it impossible for the baronet to turn pale, but his dull eyes gleamed with anger, and his hands, which never were quite still, trembled excessively.

'You are welcome to Glen Druid whenever you please to come, papa,' she went on; 'but my banker's book is my private property. You have always taught me how necessary it is to look after one's self, and I have profited by your lessons. You are quite right in saying that I owe you nothing, and in making no claims. You have no claim upon me whatsoever. You left me to shift for myself; I have done so, and I mean to do so now that the shifts are no longer hard.'

Sir Guy, whose feeble legs shook under him with passion, sat down on a slab of rock, and regarded his daughter malignly, without speaking. Gwendoline, on her part, affected to consider the topic at an end. 'What an ink-black cloud is rising in the west, yonder; there will presently be a storm. Had we not better seek the house?'

'You may go, but I shall not,' returned the baronet hoarsely. 'I will never set foot in your house again, ungrateful, unnatural girl! Is it possible you are my own flesh and blood?'

'This is mere melodrama,' replied Gwendoline harshly; 'a rôle you are quite unfit to play, papa. Besides, you are inconsistent. I was not less your flesh and blood, I suppose, when you washed your hands of me. Come, come; I think you know me better than to use such arguments; and I am sure, papa, quite sure, that I know you.'

It was impossible to imagine a tone more chilling and contemptuous than that in which she spoke, or one more barren of the expectations to which her father looked.

Sir Guy, savage and snubbed, perceived that the affair was hopeless.

'I have heard of the heartlessness of *speculators*,' said he with bitter emphasis, 'but I could not have believed in such conduct as this. Henceforth, it seems, I am to possess no daughter; but ere I leave you, Goneril, let me discharge one last duty—give you one last warning—beware of fortune-hunters, who have not only no claims (such as you deny me), but who will have no scruples.'

'Thank you, papa,' said Gwendoline smiling (she had weighed the possible consequences of his putting his threat of leaving her roof upon the instant into execution, and not perhaps without some passionate reviling spoken to other ears, and had found them serious); 'and in return for that valuable advice of yours, I will let you have the sum you mention—this once. Perhaps, after all, considering what my London outfit may have cost you, it is your due. But henceforth, remember, our accounts are balanced; your acceptance of this money is to be a receipt in full.—It is coming on to rain, papa, as I expected; let me offer you my arm to the house.'

'I prefer to walk alone,' answered Sir Guy gloomily.

And they returned within doors by separate ways.

CHAPTER XXIV.—AT LAST.

However wise, in a worldly point of view, Gwendoline might be in thus cutting off her relations with Sir Guy, his withdrawal from Glen Druid left her more companionless, and therefore more wretched, even than before. How could the

weary, weary time ever be wiled away, till she should once more see Piers Mostyn; have his beloved self to interpose between her and the furies that pursued her! She was frantically eager for his presence, but he was abroad just now, and seemed to her to prolong his stay there needlessly. In one sense, she was right. He might, of course, have come to England, and even have met her, if he chose. But he felt quite sure of her, and sure of her late husband's money, and he had no wish to be tempted to do anything which might get themselves 'talked about,' and endanger their future position in society. With respect to this sort of forethought, indeed, it seemed that the two had changed places—characters. It was Piers who was all for prudence now: a man has many methods of making the time pass pleasantly which are denied to the other sex; or, at the reflection that he was enjoying himself, or, at all events, not suffering one tittle of the wretchedness that consumed her, did not tend to console his would-be bride.

To stay at Glen Druid any longer, at last became impossible to her: her life there—dull and yet deceptive—was growing insupportable, while, when not actually playing her part, she was a prey to nervous terrors. An actress without rest, or even natural sleep! It was insupportable, and she felt that it was driving her mad. She suddenly resolved to move to London: there at least would be amusement, distraction from thought, and mitigation of Miss Ferrier's twaddle. She did not even call in person to thank her neighbours for their 'kind inquiries,' but sent round cards with an inch deep of black edging: it was understood that she was not 'equal' to such an ordeal, and that Dr Gisborne had recommended immediate change of scene. Her now completely won-over sister-in-law was by no means averse to accompany her. She honestly believed that Glasgow was the finest city in the universe, as it most unquestionably was the most pious, but still she was not so prejudiced but that she had some desire to see its rival, London. Moreover, it was a novel and most exquisite sensation to her to travel and be lodged and boarded at somebody else's expense. The whole party—for, of course, the children were taken by their anxious step-mother—put up at a fashionable hotel in a Mayfair square, which was in itself a rare treat to Judith. She had never staid at an hotel before; to put one's head into such an establishment, had been, in her view of domestic economy, to be half-ruined; to have a meal therein was to 'eat gold.' Of course they were neither so well lodged nor fed—there are not half-a-dozen hotels in London where a good dinner is to be got, unless you measure excellence by price—as at Glen Druid, and the horses and carriages were very inferior; but still the reflection that everything cost a mint of money, and that she had not to pay one shilling of it, filled her with a fearful joy. To do her justice, she had offered to subscribe her share, which she had modestly estimated at thirty-seven shillings and sixpence a week; but Gwendoline had met this offer with such a dignified refusal, that she never recurred to it again.

Perhaps Mrs Ferrier made more sure of Judith by this little bit of well-judged liberality, than by all those previous efforts at conciliation which had cost her so much. If so, that was her only gain in coming to town; such grave amusements as she could enter into in correct Judith's company, bored

and oppressed her to the last degree. Black Care sat behind her wherever she moved; and in the midst of London life, she neither lost forgetfulness of the past nor anxiety for the future. What was Piers Mostyn doing? and why did he still delay to fly to her, even though she was now in town, and out of the reach of prying gossips? She was quite unaware that the tone of her own letters did much towards keeping him at a distance. Piers was by no means a dull man, and he had much experience of women. He knew of what they are capable, when actuated either by love or hate; and in Gwendoline's ardent sentences he detected now and then a certain desperation which alarmed him. If he were to obey her impatient summons, she would as likely as not make a fool of herself. Under the circumstances, she ought not to have the opportunity of being 'demonstrative.' Let her stop for a few months longer with Judy—as he persisted in calling the respectable Miss Ferrier—who seemed a quiet old personage, and very well adapted to take charge of her. Besides the desperation, too, and in curious contrast with it, there was something hard, and almost morose, in Gwendoline's letters, which suggested some enigma to him, though without any hint at its solution; and Piers did not like enigmas. Upon the whole, he resolved for the present to stop where he was, at Geneva, or, at all events, not to come to London.

But Gwendoline was equally determined that they should meet, and that at once. By return of post, a letter arrived from Dr Gisborne, in reply to a communication from herself, with a strong recommendation that she should go abroad. There was nothing like a thorough change of scene for one whose nerves had been so terribly tried as hers had been, and the symptoms of which she wrote were exactly those which evidenced that the constitution was suffering from mental causes. Switzerland was as good a place as she could go to. He could not say that it would be any particular benefit to the children; but there was no reason why it should hurt them while the summer lasted. As for the exact locality, they might all go to Lucerne (for instance), and the sooner the better. Before Gwendoline placed this letter in her sister-in-law's hands, she had carefully paved the way for its reception. Instead of keeping her sufferings (which were real enough) to herself, as heretofore, she had let them be seen, and excited Judith's sympathy. 'You can't be well, my dear,' Miss Ferrier had observed; 'and I do wish you would consult somebody. It's no use throwing away your guineas upon London physicians, who don't understand your constitution; but sit down at once, and write to Dr Gisborne, who will give you the best advice for nothing at all.'

The good lady, however, little imagined that the prescription would have taken this particular form. She, for her part, was very well content with London; her simple fancy was easily pleased; and even to see her name every week in the *Morning Post*, as still resident in the Mayfair square hotel, had an unspeakable charm for her. Moreover, she detested 'foreign parts.' In her eyes, the shadow of popery darkened more or less every continental nation; and to venture under it was to be influenced by it in spite of one's self. To do her justice, she was moved not only by the reflection of the unpleasant change which such apostasy might create in her own prospects for the future; she was 'looked up to' by many faithful people in

Glasgow, and any backsliding of hers would have weight with others. If the pope were to make a convert of Judith Ferrier, the blow to Protestantism in that city would be very considerable. He would probably, therefore, spare no effort to accomplish this object; and was it right in her, she argued, to give him the chance? Upon these elevated grounds, she declined, point-blank, to cross the Channel; and Gwendoline, from her inability to rise to the same plane, found it exceedingly difficult to combat them. But she had not gone through so much, since she had become a widow, to conciliate this good lady, and secure her moral support, to be vanquished in this last struggle. She had sheltered herself thus far under her ægis of respectability; and she could not afford in this, the most dangerous act she had yet ventured upon, to do without its protection. Her sister-in-law must be carried abroad somehow, and give the sanction of her presence to the meeting between herself and Piers. One would have thought it almost impossible that Judith Ferrier would have been a marketable commodity anywhere, or under any circumstances; and yet, as it so happened, she had become of the greatest possible social value. Her rigid virtue, so far from being only its own reward, was worth at least five hundred pounds in hard cash—and fetched it. Gwendoline was compelled to treat the affair as a matter of business, and at the same time to shew the obligation would be on her own side. She painted in glowing colours the advantage which the children, as well as herself, enjoyed from Judith's companionship, and adjured her not to withdraw it. It would be unreasonable, indeed, to expect her to sacrifice herself to others for nothing, and if she (Gwendoline) went abroad without her, it would be necessary for her to engage, at a large stipend, some other lady as chaperon, so that the money must be spent either way. Why, then, should Miss Ferrier refuse to accept it, and, which was of more moment, shrink from the task of defending her little niece from that insidious foe, Romanism, to the attacks of which her tender age and impressionable nature would be especially exposed? For herself, Gwendoline acknowledged that she was but an indifferent spiritual pastor. Would Judith Ferrier, then, abandon the Lamb to the Wolf, because she feared for her own faith? Gwendoline could never believe that.

Nor were other arguments wanting of considerable power of a heterogeneous kind. The five hundred pound cheque was, as we have hinted, not without its influence, especially as, so far from being considered as a bribe, it was only an inadequate requital for services to be rendered. The sea-passage would be taken on a fine day, and between the nearest opposite points of the Channel. They were to stay nowhere where there was not a Lutheran chapel, or, at all events, a Protestant service upon the Sabbath; and she, Miss Ferrier, was never to be asked to join in promiscuous bathing. Among the information concerning foreign parts of which she had possessed herself, was the fact, that there were no locks to the chamber-doors in foreign parts; and a portion of the five hundred pounds was, in consequence, invested in a door-fastener of gigantic size and subtle workmanship, which subsequently excited no little suspicion when the luggage came to be examined by the French authorities.

It is one of the smaller penalties which egotists

have to pay, that not only does it soon destroy the sense of humour, but after a while we lose even the pleasure derived from cynicism; otherwise, Gwendoline could not but have been amused with the opinions and observations of her travelling companion. That lady may have been mistaken in her views of politics, when she wished to know why the arms of England had not been turned to the useful purpose of compelling foreign nations to learn and speak our language; but her remarks upon the table-d'hôte *potages*, 'rags of meat floating in melted butter and water; and on the *rôtis*, were really worthy of preservation. 'How was it,' said she, 'that though they saw in the flesh what seemed to have been boiled for soups, they never saw the soups that those rags must at some remote period have made?' At first, indeed, through disgust at these plainer dishes, and avoidance of the *entrées*, through fear of there being a frog in them, Miss Ferrier confined her eating to bread at discretion, and even with this precaution she did not preserve herself from the frightful experience of partaking of an aniseed cake at the Verviers Railway Station, the memory of which, if not the actual taste of it, remained with her to her dying day. At the Prussian frontier, when they inquired if she had 'anything to declare,' it was with difficulty that she could be restrained from stating her various grievances; while her passport—without which she imagined herself to be liable to the fate of Baron Trenck or Silvio Pellico—was on no occasion extracted from her save at the point of the bayonet. Then, after each day of alien oppression and stubborn resistance, to hear her comments on the comfortable plan of the bed-chambers, on the little slop-basins, in which she was expected to wash, and on the table-napkins with cotton balls all round them, which served for towels, would have moved Memnon to smiles. But for Gwendoline there was no such innocent mirth; no distraction from thought in change of scene or of people; no pleasure, no rest. The Rhine itself was but another and more tedious means of travel than the railway. Her gaze rested upon castle and tower, on road and river, on forest and vineyard, with the same absent air; her inward eye only beheld one object for which she pined. She had neither regret nor remorse—to be so called—but she felt that until that object was arrived at she should be wretched. She was, however, getting very near it now. They had taken up their abode at Lucerne, and Piers Mostyn was no farther off than Geneva.

The party were very welcome at the *Schweizer Hof*, although it was the height of the season. They had taken the best rooms that were to be got, and it was understood that they were to reside for a considerable time. Gwendoline and Miss Ferrier did not, however, dine in their own apartments, but at the table-d'hôte; and all who patronised it soon began to rave about the young Englishwoman, so beautiful and so rich, who was reported to be such an exemplary step-mother, and was certainly the most quiet and sedate of widows who ever—for some unexplained reason—found it impossible to live at home. Without gossip, even Swiss scenery palls upon polite society—besides that, upon wet days, one has really nothing else to fall back upon—and a favourite topic of conversation among the English portion of the frequenters of the table-d'hôte was the

high play and reckless libertinism of the Honourable Piers Mostyn, who, it seemed, had acquired quite a continental reputation in that way. The news did not greatly disturb Gwendoline. In the first place, since she knew his character so thoroughly, she was quite prepared for such intelligence; and secondly, she reflected that the more dissolutely he lived, the more he would be in want of money, and the sooner he would therefore be necessitated to apply to the sole source whence he could now obtain it.

On the receipt of Gwendoline's first summons from Lucerne, however, Piers made up his mind to obey it; but he sent before him a letter full of such advice as made her pale cheek flush. She was adjured to receive him—if their meeting should take place, as it was very likely to do, in public—with quiet coldness, and to evince a careless surprise, as though the *rencontre* had been quite unpremeditated. It was all important, he urged, as respected their future position, that they should be prudent now, and especially on such an occasion. The idea of being schooled as to social behaviour by any human being—much more by a roué and gambler such as Piers—would, a few months back, have made her lip curl with bitterest contempt. But it was not so now. It did not even yet occur to her that the passionate tone of her own letters had made her lover doubtful of her self-command; but what was worse, she felt that his warning was not needless. She was no longer the woman of three years ago, who had dismissed him from her side notwithstanding his fond entreaties, to execute a far-sighted scheme that in the end should bring them nearer. The scheme had succeeded, and she was greedy to pluck the fruit of it. For three long years she had played the hypocrite, and she eagerly-longed (as though it had been possible,) to be once more herself again; for three long years she had worn the fetters of convention, and she ardently yearned to enjoy her freedom with him, for whose sake she had become a slave. No new plighted innocent girl ever awaited the coming of her beloved one with so intense a desire as was consuming her. Every day, every hour of enforced deceit increased it: she had earned her wages—none knew save herself by what toil and trouble, none guessed by what remorse and despair, and her heart urgently demanded payment at once and in full. Long habit of dissimulation had made her part with others easy enough to play; but she mistrusted her own powers in the presence of him for whose sake she had abandoned nature for the stage.

This woman, too, whose countenance she had at so great a sacrifice secured, would be a spectator only too likely to be critical, and perhaps even suspicious. Piers was already on his way—he had preferred to make the journey on foot, perhaps, as she bitterly thought, for the very purpose of delay, and might now come across them at any moment—in their drives, their walks, their boating excursions, abroad or within doors. Would it be possible to receive him as she had once so easily made up her mind to do, in that seemingly so far back time, when it was he who was rash, and she who was prudent? When any new object of beauty or of interest was pointed out to her, as among those fair scenes it often was, even by her unimpulsive companion, she flushed and started, notwith-

standing all her efforts at self-control. The reflection that Miss Ferrier had not so much as known of Piers Mostyn's existence a week ago, and could certainly not identify him as her lover, was useless to restrain her. As lake, and forest, and mountain were nothing to *her*, who only looked for Piers, so she thought it must be with others.

At last the long-looked-for meeting took place, and, as generally happens in such cases, under circumstances quite unexpected. They were taking their places at the table-d'hôte as usual, when Miss Ferrier whispered to her: 'What a very handsome young man that is, my dear, who has just come in!'

Gwendoline looked up towards the doorway of the *salle à manger*, carelessly enough, and there stood Piers.

WINTERING AT MENTONE.

CHAPTER III.

To numberless individuals, the want of mental occupation is seemingly not a matter of regret. They have come to the continent for the sake of gaiety. The pleasures of dancing, dressing, and private theatricals are what they alone care for. Fun must be had, though the forfeiture of health, and even of existence, should be the penalty. Here arise some strange reflections as to wintering in Mentone. Several English medical practitioners reside in the town during the winter, among whom Dr J. Henry Bennet acts as consulting physician. It is customary for invalids on arrival to ask advice regarding their respective complaints from one or other of these professional gentlemen; but frequently the advice is not strictly followed, and fatal consequences ensue. The sunshine and azure skies tempt to take unjustifiable liberties. It is forgotten that the season is winter—that the night-air is cold and dangerous—that going out to parties of amusement in the evening, except for the young and robust, is extremely hazardous. The more staid order of visitors of course remain in their hotels in the evening, there finding such slender means of amusement as these houses afford. Others, heedless of consequences, and unable to resist temptations, accept invitations to dancing-parties, although perhaps aware that one of their lungs is already gone, and that the other is in process of decay. They have come to Mentone to have that one lung healed, and with care the object might be accomplished; but how is it possible to resist going to that delightful party! As well, they say, go into an infirmary at once! These perverse indiscretions cause the death of several visitors every year. Such conduct gives fair-play neither to the climate nor to the physician who is consulted. I was told of a young gentleman of fortune with lungs very much gone, who, contrary to advice, attended a dancing-party two years ago. The result was very abrupt. He dropped down in the room, was carried out, and died in the passage. In that 'Dance of Death' he had finished the last atom of lung. While I write, a young lady, con-

sidered the beauty of the season, is pointed out as having only one lung, which she is doing all in her power to get rid of. What is the use of invalids of this stamp coming to Mentone, unless it be for the pleasure of finishing their career abroad? Dr Bennet, with whom I had some conversation on the subject of climate and hygiene, speaks despondingly of these errors, and mentioned a number of cases which proved 'fatal,' but might have been effectually cured had his professional advice been followed. But the same thing, I suppose, could be said by all medical men whatsoever. 'I will die, and nobody shall save me.'

Probably an excuse may be offered for these irregularities on account of the deficiency of rational and available amusement. At Nice, there is a military band which plays almost daily in the Jardin Public, much to the gratification of the visitors. There is nothing of this kind at Mentone, neither does there exist any means of genial or social intercourse on a scale worth speaking of. The English-speaking population are scattered about among the hotels and villas, and are generally unknown to each other; while the obligation of not venturing over the door after dark, if one has any regard to health, is in itself an insuperable difficulty. In these circumstances, it would greatly contribute to the pleasure of a winter sojourn at Mentone were a few mutual friends, with similarity of tastes, to sojourn at the same establishment.

With little in the way of public amusement or social intercourse, Mentone and its neighbourhood offer some subjects of interesting inquiry. The older part of the town is in itself a study. Originally walled for defence, it consists of a dense cluster of tall antiquated tenements, rising pile above pile from the sea-shore to the summit of one of those low hills which stand out in advance of the higher mountains. From the modern street, forming part of the thoroughfare of the Corniche, we ascend into this strange mass of buildings by steep paved lanes, which turn and wind in different directions, until we reach the top, where on the site of the ancient castle is found the cemetery of the town, from which there is an extensive prospect over sea and land.

At the foot of the ascent, wheeled carriages are left behind. The lanes, though dignified with the name of streets, are accessible only to foot-passengers or donkeys. The principal one is the Rue Longue, which had formed the only thoroughfare previous to the construction of the Corniche, and had been protected at each end by a vaulted gateway and guardhouse. The gates have been long since removed, leaving free access to all who feel any interest in perambulating the narrow passage, now sunk into the character of a back street. Being paved with small rounded stones, with an inclination to a central gutter, and environed with tall antique buildings, you feel pretty much as if walking along the bottom of a drain, but there the resemblance ends, for, to do the inhabitants justice, the road is remarkably clean, which is more than can be said for the public and more pretentious promenades. The massive tenements, five or six stories in height, are laid out in separate dwellings, reached by narrow common stairs. In the lower floor were the shops, consisting of dingy vaults with round-topped doorways, some down and others up a step,

and a good deal of irregularity throughout. The Quai Bonaparte having drawn away all general traffic, the Rue Longue has, in a business sense, correspondingly declined. You see vaults which had been great shops in their day, sorrowfully shut up, their clumsy old-fashioned doors dreadfully in want of paint, fastened with queer-looking decayed padlocks. As, however, there must still be a demand in the crowded floors above for the essentials of existence, the street is not without some traces of commerce. When grand concerns disappear, hucksters step in to occupy the field, just as when some imposing order of forest trees are swept to destruction, shrubs of various species start beneficently into existence. In the Rue Longue, accordingly, you will not be surprised, but rather on the whole gratified, to see a certain class of dealers—old women selling bread and oranges, modestly exhibited on a slip of shelf outside the door, with meal and flour in a small way in bags inside the threshold, along with possibly cheap cuts of dry fish in steep to meet demands on Fridays; establishments purporting to be a 'Débit de Vin'; a 'Boucherie,' authorised to sell 'bœuf, agneau, et de veau au 2^{me} qualité;' or a respectable middle-aged spinster retailing a miscellany of tapes and other small wares. Dull and composed even at midday, the long Rue has an air of solitude. There is little stirring. The only sound heard is that of a shoemaker, who, seated outside his door, for the sake of air and light, is industriously hammering his leather; besides which spectacle of activity you will have the satisfaction of observing a wrinkled old crone airing herself on the step of a doorway, and spinning with the distaff—a picture for your sketch-book, if artistically inclined.

Outside the entrance to the Rue Longue on the south, and at right angles to it, is a street now called the Rue Brea, possessing some good specimens of domestic architecture, dating from the seventeenth century, if not earlier. A tenement at the west corner on the south side, bearing traces of frescoes on the walls, is that in which General Brea was born in 1790, the fact being commemorated by an inscription on a marble slab over the doorway. Mentone has some credit in having put up several inscriptions of this nature in memory of incidents of local or historical interest. Brea was killed in the streets of Paris on the 24th of June 1848, when fighting in the cause of order, wherefore the inhabitants honourably acknowledge him as a native. In the same street, near the middle on the north side, there is a terrace-wall enclosing a piece of ground in which stands a house that had been temporarily occupied in 1814 by Pope Pius VII., on his return towards Italy, after a compulsory residence in France. This visit of the pope, and the circumstance of his having graciously blessed the people at this spot, are matters carefully recorded on a marble slab inserted in the wall. On the second floor of a house, marked No. 3, in the same street, Bonaparte resided on the occasion of passing through the town, when commanding the army of Italy. The dwelling is at present occupied by a venerable ecclesiastic, with whom I had an agreeable interview regarding the social aspects of Mentone.

Strangers who are curious in antiquities, or in the manners and habits of the humbler classes, will find not a little to interest them in the intri-

cately arranged piles of old buildings adjoining the port. Here are the residences of the fishing population, who, with immense toil and perseverance, draw a precarious means of subsistence from the Mediterranean. Their life is about as hard as can be imagined. The sea is so deep a short distance from the land, that no regular shoals of fish are fallen in with, and often, after a whole morning's exertion, a take worth only a few francs is secured. The drawing of the nets by long ropes to the shore is one of the sights of the Promenade du Midi. It is a miserable business altogether; and no way aided by any special accommodation at 'the port,' which in truth is no port at all, but only a small space of dry ground sloping to the beach, up which small craft are drawn by a windlass to be out of the reach of the sea; wherefore both at beaching and launching, an extraordinary commotion takes place among the male and female maritime population, all turning out to further the operation. The government has commenced to form a real port; but considering the exposed nature of the coast, and the heavy surge that prevails in high south-east winds, the success of the attempt is very doubtful. Certainly some harbourage for even fishing-boats is very greatly wanted.

In the inhabitants, generally, who are crowded in the narrow and crooked passages adjoining the port, we have a proper specimen of the aborigines—a people illiterate and uninstructed, but from naturally good dispositions, industrious and well conducted. The older among them are said to be unable to read, which is not unlikely, considering their past history; at anyrate, I never saw either book or newspaper in their hands. Since the expulsion of the tyrant family of Grimaldis, and the annexation of Mentone to France, the town has been provided with schools, at which there is a large attendance of children; but beyond some efforts of this kind, nothing is attempted to enlighten the humbler classes. Although there is a population of about six thousand, the town possesses no school of arts for the improvement of mechanics, no lectures on miscellaneous subjects of interest, no popular concerts, no native newspapers to concentrate and direct public opinion. The young are suffered to grow to manhood without intelligent direction. The only provision for their leisure hours is made by the keepers of cafés and billiard-rooms, or by the gambling establishment at Monaco, which can be reached by the railway in fifteen minutes. This state of things is not very creditable to the more thoughtful part of the community; and does not come up to what is frequently represented as the activity of continental governments in stimulating advancement in arts and science. To remedy the utter absence of local public spirit, the central authorities in Paris beneficently prepare and circulate a news-sheet gratuitously all over France. It is designated the *Moniteur des Communes*, and resembles a page of a newspaper, closely printed in columns. Dispersed from the Ministry of the Interior, it is stuck up as a placard in every commune. Besides scraps of news on such subjects as the opening of the Suez Canal, the paper contains a variety of useful information regarding movements in commerce and agriculture, with advices as to the treatment of vines. The thing is really well done and well meant, but so far as Mentone is concerned, it suffers the usual fate of all that is given for nothing. Although this sheet

is regularly stuck up at the market-place, no one is ever seen reading it—not that the people despise the information which is offered, but because it is not their practice to read anything.

With such an entire absence of wholesome mental exhilaration, it does not surprise us to see that there is an inordinate number of *débâts de vin*, dingy vaults, furnished with deal tables and benches, where the imbibing of thin potatoes drawn in jugs from the cask, forms a popular indulgence. I am bound, however, to add, that whether from the weakness of the liquor, or an indisposition to spend, there is little or no external demonstration of drunkenness. As a whole, the people are sober and thrifty in their habits. Here, as in other towns in France, intemperance in tobacco-smoking is greatly more conspicuous than in the consumption of liquors. I see it stated among national statistics that the quantity of cigars smoked in France during a year, would, if put end to end, go twice round the globe at the equator. In this monstrous wastefulness of means as well as of brains, the female population take no part. It is impossible to over-rate the thrift and assiduity of the humbler class of women, both old and young. Their small industrial occupations for a subsistence are most meritorious. One of their pursuits is the sale of roasted chestnuts, an article much in request.

As at Nice, the carrying of articles poised on the top of the head is a common practice of the women of Mentone. They may be seen coming daily into the town loaded with baskets of oranges or lemons, or with huge bundles of sticks for fuel, in some instances their hands being employed in knitting. As suitable for this kind of drudgery, they wear a straw-hat, almost flat like a trencher, with a small round space raised in the middle on which the load is balanced. These hats, formed by a peculiar interweaving of straw and cotton, are one of the special manufactures of the district around. Some hats of a superior quality with fanciful trimmings are becomingly worn by young ladies. Besides fruits and sticks, bundles of fir-cones are brought into the town for sale. Of all the toils of the women of Mentone this is the most severe. The cones, called here *pommes des pins*, are gathered among the scattered forests of pines high up on the mountains, and brought down in bags to be sold for lighting fires. Arrived at the market-place, the girls sit down patiently with their loads, which are offered at the price per bag of twelve sous—sixpence for all this torturing labour. I could not help pitying these females, brown, skinny, and barefooted, with faces like leather, who are engaged in these rude occupations; but painful as is the sight, is not the labour honest, and how much more distressing is the spectacle of flaunting vice and wretchedness in our own country?

The denudation of the mountains, by the removal of cones, or by cutting down the timber for fuel, is spoken of as likely to cause a want of rain, with the usual consequence of droughts fatal to husbandry. In some parts of France, this result has already occurred. At Mentone, there is an increasing scarcity of water, the dependence being almost entirely on pump-wells. The torrents so called are as dry as a street, or, at the utmost, exhibit a few miserable pools of water, which have percolated through the masses of gravel. These pools,

dirty and offensive, are the washing-tubs of the town. Around one favourite gutter, I one day reckoned as many as fifty-two washerwomen, all kneeling as close to each other as possible, and all using the same opaque frothy liquid. The sight of these bands of kneeling figures at the outlet of the Carei, where a pool accumulates after having served the like purpose farther up the bed of rubbish, is about as extraordinary as can be witnessed. How clothes can be cleansed by washing in such puddles is a mystery I cannot venture to explain, and must leave the elucidation to a jury of matrons. All I can say is, that in this as in other toilsome employments, the women of Mentone exhibit a spirit of ceaseless and uncomplaining industry. Poor as the females evidently are, they shew uncommon skill in the patching and mending of clothes. The needle must be in frequent requisition, for nowhere is there to be seen a ragged garment on man or woman. It would be a great mistake to imagine that the French, with all their light-heartedness, are an idly disposed people. Taking them all in all, they work too much; for as there is no law in France against working or transacting business on Sunday, many who are so inclined labour seven days a week. Such a constant round of laborious occupation cannot have a beneficial effect, and that the humbler orders in this small town should be so generally well conducted as they are, says not a little for their placidity of character. All they need is cultivation. From what cause I know not, there is a growing abstinence from ordinary work on Sunday. The practice of closing the shops that day in Mentone is more common than it was some years ago; comparatively few loaded carts are seen in the streets; building operations are for the most part suspended; and scarcely any donkeys with their burdens are observed trooping in from the country. These may be deemed gratifying symptoms of an improved tone of feeling, the more creditable for being spontaneous, at least without legal obligation.

It might perhaps be argued that the cessation of donkey-traffic on Sundays is as much due to commercial as to religious scruples. I am not aware that any animals are kept ready for hire at the *Stations des Anes*. These establishments are only dépôts for ass-saddles, where orders can be executed. The donkeys come from the hills in the morning laden with fruits or other articles, in charge of a female; and having done what might be thought a fair day's work, are ready for hire at the *stations*, to go on excursions with invalids on their backs to and from places in the neighbourhood. As few visitors employ them on Sunday, it may seem advantageous not to bring them to town on that day. If so, the donkeys have reason to be thankful. These docile creatures, contriving 'a double debt to pay,' might be styled the true bread-winners of the peasant proprietary. Traveling by pathways wholly inaccessible to wheeled carriages, they are seen not only bringing down loads of native produce, but carrying up stones, lime, and other building-materials to places two thousand feet above the sea-level. But for these useful animals, the hilly region would be in a great measure valueless. So far as the Riviera is concerned, the ass must be considered to be a beneficent gift of nature.

The people occupying the slopes and recesses of the hills are, like their kindred in Mentone, of an

Italian type, and cling with tenacity to their old usages and habits. From generation to generation, they have occupied their small properties. Simple and frugal in their way of living, consuming no foreign or taxable luxuries, they follow out their obscure destiny in a manner that entitles them to respect. Conquered by the Romans, harassed by the Grimaldis, they have been so fortunate as to suffer no absolute robbery of houses and lands. Dynasties may come and go. It is pretty much the same who are their nominal superiors. What they have to do is to attend to their patch of olives, oranges, or lemons. All the year round, the sun beats down on their little properties; and provided they can secure a proper supply of water for irrigation, they bask amidst permanent luxuriance. Water is to them most precious. Every proprietor must have a tank for receiving the runs of water from the pathways, in case of rain; and all along the hill-sides are constructed channels for bringing supplies from distant sources. With such appliances, a craggy steep, with but faint traces of soil, becomes fertile and beautiful. In buying pieces of ground, therefore, care is taken to stipulate for some sort of water privilege; such, for instance, as a right to have water turned on one or more days, or hours, per week.

Excursions, whether by donkey or on foot, are to many visitors to Mentone the chief solace during a winter's residence. Near the town, the lateral valleys lead to numerous localities attractive for their beauty, or for the extensive prospect which they offer. From the valley of the Borigo, visitors may climb to the lofty heights of St Agnes, whence the view will comprehend the mountains of Corsica. By an ascent of not more than five hundred feet from the valley of the Carei, we reach the summit of a woody hill where stands the monastery of the Annunziata, an establishment with live monks, in brown cloth gowns and sandals, who are seen creeping about daily in quest of alms. I derived some amusement from short drives and walking excursions across the frontier of the Pont St Louis into Italy. In this direction, at the distance of a mile, Dr Bennet has constructed a garden in the form of terraces, devoted to the cultivation of choice flowering-plants, which in England would in winter need the shelter and warmth of a greenhouse; and here, with a commanding outlook on the Mediterranean, he spends part of his leisure in horticultural recreations.

To pass the time with any degree of satisfaction in a place so abandoned to the genius of dulness as Mentone, it is very desirable to have some distinct pursuit, be it to study the habits of the people, to sketch the picturesque features of the country, or to pursue inquiries into the geology or the vegetable characteristics of the neighbourhood. The mountain masses of cretaceous limestone, the lower ridges of sandstone and conglomerate, the ancient bone-caves, all afford an interesting study. Excepting as regards some beautiful butterflies glittering in green and gold, and the pretty lizards which run about on the walls, or whisk in and out among the rocks, there is not much to engage the attention of the naturalist. The odious and cruel practice of shooting every kind of small bird, has almost cleared the neighbourhood of feathered flying animals, a circumstance which imparts a certain silence and deadness to the scenery. English visitors residing at the hotels sometimes

remonstrate against serving up dishes of larks, robins, and sparrows, but still the practice of killing these small birds is continued, and, to the discredit of the municipal authorities, the firing of guns for this species of barbarous sport is unchecked in the streets and promenades. For the botanist, there is a wide and varied field of observation. To any one from a northern region, there is a pleasing novelty in the trees, shrubs, and flowering-plants which clothe and decorate the landscape. The chief feature is a universal greenness, in tints varying from the dark olive to the lighter hues of the orange and lemon. The olive trees grow to a large size, and many of them are several centuries old. In the grounds on the sea-level grow the date-palm, the aloe, and cactaceæ, also numerous succulent plants, including the mesembryanthemum in great profusion. In gardens, though it be winter, we see geraniums, myrtles, pelargoniums, salvias, and Chinese roses in blossom. Wild daisies and violets are seen by the way-sides. Fig-trees grow in various quarters, but in winter are bare of leaves. For a general account of the horticultural character of the locality, I must refer to the work of Dr Bennet, and likewise to the elegant brochures of Mr J. Traherne Moggridge,* a young gentleman who has spent several winters in the successful prosecution of botanical pursuits in this very interesting neighbourhood. I left the place with some regret, for though the weather had latterly been far from agreeable, I had escaped an exceedingly severe and trying winter at home. Should I ever visit Mentone again, I trust to find it improved as regards both water and drainage, and likewise that those marked defects in its police regulations will be remedied, to which I have ventured to call attention. W. C.

* *Contributions to the Flora of Mentone*, with Coloured Engravings. London, 1868.

THE ANCIENT PORTRAIT.

It hung alone, in massive time-tinged frame,
Upon the corridor's dark oaken side,
And sunbeams through the antique casement came,
To kiss the face that beamed like a bride.
Though time had breathed o'er it a shadowy haze,
And though her garb of olden time seemed quaint,
Yet pure as e'en, suffused with Sol's rich rays,
Shone her sweet smiles from forth the lifeless paint.
What knightly heart by those dark eyes enthralled,
The tourney's strife hath borne, and won the day,
The vict'ry his, and more, his to be called
Her champion, his the rosy ribbon gay.
What sports afield, upon her palfrey gray,
Hath she enjoyed; oft may that portrayed hand
Have tossed th' unhooded falcon at its prey,
And the pathetic, trembling harp-strings spanned.
But Luna off the bosom of the lake
Hath silvered with her fairy gild since she
Her dwelling changed, whence she will never wake,
To chase the deer across the autumn lea.
The chapel now a sculptured form contains,
Its hands are closed in prayer, its gaze upturned,
And in the vault, where chilly blackness reigns,
Lies the dark lamp that once with beauty burned.

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